

'I support refugees and I vote'

That was the message that members of the Yass branch of Rural Australians for Refugees were sending this week to candidates in the Eden-Monaro by-election.

Along with five other Rural Australians for Refugee (RAR) groups in Eden-Monaro, members of Yass RAR have been sending postcards to candidates highlighting concerns about injustices being experienced by refugees.

Yass RAR says these injustices include:

- the exclusion of temporary visa holders from Government's relief packages such as Job-Keeper during the pandemic, despite the contribution they have made to our communities
- the excessive length of detention for refugees detained offshore and for those detained onshore as a result of the Medivac legislation;
- Some refugees having been held in offshore detention for seven years - #7yearstoolong;
- And the proposed legislation giving Border Force officers power to confiscate phones from refugees in detention.



Therese Van Leeuwin and Dr Aedeon Cremin writing postcards on Saturday, organised by Yass Rural Australians for Refugees.

"While there are many important issues of great concern to locals, we feel it's vital that we continue to represent the concerns of refugees. They haven't gone away – in fact, in many ways the situation for refugees has worsened because of the coronavirus pandemic," said Sarah Johnston, Convenor of Yass RAR.

From Yass alone, more than 150 postcards were written, addressed, stamped and sent to candidates in the by-election.

"We know it doesn't necessarily make a huge difference, still it's important that our next federal representative is in no doubt this is an issue of concern to local constituents. It hasn't just gone away," Sarah said.